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From: Shore, Berry
Sent: Wed 7/20/2016 12:31:56 PM
Subject: PFOA/PFOS - Newburgh Clips

Schumer calls for expedited probe of contaminated Newburgh water supply: Air National Guard's fall start is 'concerning'

By Leonard Sparks

Posted Jul. 19, 2016 at 7:00 PM

Times Herald-Record

Photo: The Air Force has said it will begin testing for perfluorinated chemicals at the Stewart Air National Guard Base this fall. The chemicals have been found in high levels in the City of Newburgh's main water source. TIMES HERALD-RECORD FILE PHOTO

CITY OF NEWBURGH – Sen. Charles Schumer is calling on the Air National Guard to expedite its probe of Stewart Air National Guard Base's role in the contamination behind the closure of the City of Newburgh's main water supply.

In a July 8 letter to Mayor Judy Kennedy, Col. Keith McDonald, the Air Force's director of logistics and installations, said groundwater and soil at 13 locations on the base will be investigated for the presence of perfluorinated chemicals beginning this fall.

Perfluorinated chemicals include perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, whose high levels spurred the closure of Washington Lake on May 2 and Newburgh's eventual transition to buying water from New York City's Catskill Aqueduct.

On Tuesday, Schumer urged Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice, director of the Air National Guard, to accelerate the military's investigation, describing the fall start as "concerning."

Schumer also called for the release of a detailed timeline outlining steps the military will

take to identify and clean up pollutants at Stewart.

“The potential human toxicity of this chemical, the fear and uncertainty that its presence spreads, and its presence in a vital drinking water source strongly argues for an expedited approach,” Schumer said. “I understand that there is a standard process, and rules concerning bids, but in this case, business as usual is just not good enough.”

Stewart Air Base has been considered the source of the contamination ever since Newburgh announced that it would cease drawing water for cooking and drinking from Washington Lake, which has been the city’s main supply.

Significantly high levels of PFOS, whose past use included firefighting foams, were found in water samples taken in March at Recreation Pond, an air base retention basin. The pond discharges into Silver Stream, whose waters are used to supplement Washington Lake.

During a June public meeting at Mount Saint Mary College, state officials said their probe into the contamination included looking at accidental discharges of foam from hangar-based fire suppression systems in 1990 and its use to extinguish an airplane fire at the base in 1996.

A contract for the military’s investigation should be awarded by the end of the month, and the work will be done in collaboration with the state Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, McDonald said in his letter to Kennedy.

Federal law requires that the Air Force first confirm that Stewart is releasing chemicals before money can be used for cleanup, he said.

“If we confirm a release has occurred from Stewart ANGB, the ANG will work with the City of Newburgh and local, state, and federal officials to determine the optimal mitigation actions,” McDonald said.

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Newburgh city manager asks state to test residents for contaminant

By Leonard Sparks

Times Herald-Record

Updated Jul 18, 2016 at 4:22 PM

CITY OF NEWBURGH – Newburgh’s city manager is asking the state Department of Health to begin testing residents in the wake of the contamination that forced the closure of the city’s primary drinking water supply in May.

In a letter sent to DOH on Wednesday, Michael Ciaravino says there is “adequate justification” for the state to offer testing for residents exposed to perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, whose levels led to the closure of Washington Lake on May 2.

State officials already launched a testing program for residents of two Rensselaer County communities whose water supplies have been tainted by perfluorooctanoic acid, a related chemical also known as PFOA.

“We are all concerned about this,” Ciaravino told the City Council during a meeting last week.

Part of a family of chemicals drawing increasing scrutiny from federal and state regulators, PFOS was first detected in Newburgh’s drinking water in December 2013 after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ordered municipalities to begin testing for the chemical.

Most people have been exposed to PFOS and PFOA because of the chemicals' past use in consumer products. But studies on animals and humans show that high levels of the chemicals are associated with health effects that include cancers, liver damage and low birth weights for infants.

High levels of PFOA spurred the EPA to issue, in November 2015, a do-not-drink recommendation covering Hoosick Falls' municipal water supply.

In February DOH began a program allowing residents to have their blood tested. Results released in June showed the average level of PFOA found in Hoosick Falls residents was more than 10 times the national average.

The Department of Health is also testing residents of the nearby Town of Petersburg, where wells have been contaminated by PFOA.

In Newburgh, residents have been asking city officials if the state is going to start a testing program, Ciaravino told DOH in his letter.

"In light of the fact that the city has no way of knowing the duration of, and at what levels our residents have historically been exposed to PFOS ... we believe there is adequate justification for the Department of Health to institute a biological testing program and health assessment study," Ciaravino wrote.

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Chalfont area well closed after contaminated water detected

By James Boyle, staff writer

Posted: Monday, July 18, 2016 5:30 pm

Intelligencer (Doylestown, PA)

(Part of the Unwell Water series on PFOS/PFOA Horsham, PA Water Contamination)

Over the past two years, 16 public wells and about 140 private wells have been shut down by contamination from perfluorooctanoic acid and perfluorooctane sulfonate. The former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster and former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Horsham, along with the active Horsham Air Guard Station, are thought to be the source of the taint.

This news organization has been investigating and writing extensively on the topic, telling the stories of local people who believe they've been sickened by the chemicals, speaking with health experts on the potential toxicity of the chemicals, and examining the actions taken by local, state and federal agencies as they address the contamination.

Chalfont, New Britain and New Britain Township have become the latest communities to shut down a public well because of contamination.

Aqua Pennsylvania alerted residents Friday that test results from one of three wells showed a high level of perfluorinated compounds. The well contained 68 ppt of perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), according to a company statement. The level is below the 70 ppt health advisory threshold set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in May.

The result prompted Aqua Pennsylvania to take the well offline, leaving it as a backup for a fire emergency. An Aqua spokeswoman declined to identify the location of the well, citing company policy not to disclose that information. The other two wells in the Chalfont-New Britain water system tested at 9.6 ppt and 24 ppt for the chemicals and remain in use.

"We were concerned about how the system would perform this past weekend with the heat," said Donna Alston, communications manager for Aqua Pennsylvania. "The two remaining wells provided an adequate supply in the extraordinary heat."

A retest of the tainted well is underway; results will take about a month, said Alston.

The water company is close to an agreement with North Penn Water Authority, which would be a backup source and provide water based on demand.

Public and private wells in Warminster, Warrington, Horsham and Doylestown Township have been shut down after water tests showed high amounts of PFOS and PFOA in the past two years. The source of the chemicals has not been officially determined.

The chemicals' presence in firefighting foams commonly used for decades at naval air bases has led many to point fingers at the former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster and the former Willow Grove Naval Air Station-Joint Reserve Base in Horsham and the active Horsham Air Guard Station, where many of the contaminated wells are located.

The U.S. Navy has agreed to pay at least \$19 million for filtration systems on the public wells, provide bottled water to affected residents until their drinking water is cleared and pay for private well users to get connected to the public system.

The answer to where the chemicals came from is not as apparent for communities like Chalfont and New Britain. The boroughs and New Britain Township are about 8 miles from the nearest military base — the Horsham Air Guard Station.

The Chalfont-New Britain system is not part of Aqua Pennsylvania's larger Neshaminy Creek Plant, which is in Middletown and fed by the Neshaminy Creek. Two weeks ago, the water company announced that 14 ppt of PFOS and 6.6 ppt of PFOA were present in water tested at the Neshaminy Creek plant, which serves approximately 38,000 customers in Bucks and Montgomery counties.

"Chalfont is a satellite system," said Alston. "It's a standalone and not part of the Neshaminy Creek system."

An expert studying the movement of PFCs in the environment told this news organization two weeks ago that PFOS and PFOA are not naturally occurring and can come from a variety of sources, such as military bases, landfills and wastewater plants.

"(The chemicals) are coming from somewhere ... not all groundwater is going to have these compounds in it," said Christopher Higgins, an associate professor with the Colorado School of Mines' department of civil and environmental engineering.

DowDuPont May Not be Able to Dodge C8 Damages

by Meagan Parrish

July 19, 2016

Chem Info

Community activists are urging Dow Chemical Co. and DuPont Co. to tell shareholders that they may be on the hook for liabilities stemming from a number of lawsuits related to the production of Teflon.

DuPont is currently facing about 3,500 lawsuits from residents near a former plant in West Virginia that made perfluorooctanoate acid, also known as PFOA or C8, which has been linked to a number of health issues. Plaintiffs claim that DuPont dumped the chemical used to make Teflon into the Ohio River, which exposed thousands of residents to harm.

In its agreement to spin off deal with Chemours Co., DuPont had required Chemours to foot the bill for C8 related damages. It's a situation that some analysts have predicted could bankrupt the already struggling Chemours. But the company recently indicated it could fight back against DuPont's indemnification claims.

According to Bloomberg, Action Fund Network and Keep Your Promises DuPont have written to the companies that before shareholders vote on the merger on July 20, they should know that DowDuPont could be stuck paying for C8 damages. The total cost for dealing with the legal mess could reach \$1.9 billion.

The activists are also asking DuPont to disclose updated federal guidelines on how much C8 people can be exposed to and if the company is required to clean up 19 potentially polluted sites. All told, the activists wrote that there are about 200 sites that could require cleanup, at a cost of \$900 million.

Trials related to C8 damages began earlier this year and so far are not favoring DuPont. Earlier this month, a jury decided that DuPont “acted with malice” by dumping C8 and awarded \$5.1 million to a man who claimed the chemical gave him cancer.

DuPont has maintained that only trace amounts of the chemical were present in the resident’s drinking water and that it was not enough to do harm.

A previous decision, in which a plaintiff was awarded a woman who got cancer \$1.6 million in damages, is being appealed.
